



For Immediate Release

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Town of East Hartford Receives \$85,200 Youth Services Prevention Grant

(September 14, 2015) **East Hartford, CT** – Mayor Marcia A. Leclerc is pleased to announce that the East Hartford Youth Task Force has been identified as a recipient of an \$85,200.00 Youth Services Prevention grant from the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch. The East Hartford Youth Task Force will receive funding for two consecutive fiscal years; 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. The East Hartford Youth Task Force functions as a component of the East Hartford Department of Youth Services.

During the last two years, the East Hartford Youth Task Force has received similar grant funding from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to provide programs and services to the youth of East Hartford. There have been numerous programs developed under this grant opportunity including Adventure Plus, Summer Adventure Plus, Girls Circle, Boys Council, and other positive youth development programs. The funding has supported extensive training of Youth Services staff to continue to bring new ideas and up-to-date theories on working with at-risk youth. Improvements have been made to enhance the use of the East Hartford Challenge and Ropes Course so that more youth will experience the benefits of adventure-based pro-social education. Many of these programs are used to support the efforts of the East Hartford Juvenile Review Board in diverting youth from the Juvenile Justice System.

“I am appreciative of the work done by our East Hartford delegation to once again secure funding which continues the valuable programming performed by our Youth

Services department,” Mayor Leclerc said. “With this money, important programs like Adventure Plus, which strengthen the bond between the youth of our community and our Police Department, as well as many others, can continue on with the great progress made in East Hartford over the years.”

For the past two years, Adventure Plus has been held at the high school, the middle school, as well as the alternative high school. The program brings students, police officers and Youth Services facilitators together to improve relationships in five-hour sessions that offer: Adventure-based/experiential learning through group interactive exercises, role-playing skits that provide perspective to police/youth interactions, and an open dialogue, which encourages mutual understanding, respect and compliance. As of August 2015, over 500 East Hartford youth in grades 6-12 and forty-three police officers (1/3 of the East Hartford Police force) have participated in the initiative. The comfort level between officers and students is often increased by the end of the day. Open and frank dialogue and role playing are the most productive part of these engagements and the give and take between youth and officers is always impactful.

For more information on resources the East Hartford Youth Services Department offers to the community, please call 860-291-7179.

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